



Brazos Valley Czech Heritage Society

P.O. Box 3383 – Bryan, TX 77805

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Spring 2023

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President's Thoughts

Ahoj, Hope everyone had a Blessed Easter and everyone is doing well in 2023 despite the unpredictable Texas weather. Reflecting on our activities for 2022 – Chapter's 25th Anniversary and Czech Heritage celebrations, Worldfest participation, baking classes and membership meetings – BVCHS is back in full force after the pandemic. Thanks to all of you for your dedication and volunteerism to our chapter whether it was selling or buying raffle tickets, decorating, setting and cleaning up for events, donating items for the Silent Auction or Worldfest, attending the Czech language or baking class or bringing your special dish for the Christmas party. Our chapter has a wonderful membership of hardworking people. When I tell other CHS chapters about our activities they are amazed at all the things we do. At our January 14, 2023 membership meeting the 2023-2024 BVCHS officers were elected. We welcome Sharon Clements as our treasurer and Jeannine Koll as our reporter and newsletter editor. We thank Jo Ann Zaeske for her 20 years of dedicated service as our treasurer, as well as, all the expertise advice she has given to our chapter over the years and Kelly Sandhop for serving as our reporter. Remember April 30, 2023 is our next BVCHS membership meeting and scholarship presentation to be held at C&J Barbeque in Bryan, Texas. Please plan to attend for good food, learn what the chapter has planned for the remainder of 2023 and congratulate our scholarship recipients.

Dej Bůh štěsti

Marie



Chapter News:

September 2022 Meeting

Brazos Valley Czech Heritage Society (BVCHS) held a chapter meeting on September 17, 2022. President Marie Dulak called the meeting to order at 1:12p.m. There were 15 members in attendance. Included in the officer reports and business portion of the meeting was a wrap up of the BVCHS Chapter's 25th Anniversary Celebration on June 11, 2022. Also discussed was the success of the Raffle Ticket Scholarship Fund-raiser--enough proceeds to help fund 4 scholarships! Details for the upcoming BVCHS October Czech Celebration were reviewed and finalized. After adjournment of the meeting, attendees enjoyed light refreshments while watching a video presentation of "Heart of the Tin Trunk", a heritage musical and celebration of life and family.

Fall Semester Czech Language Class

The Fall Czech Language class sponsored by BVCHS was held from September 19 to December 5, 2022 at the St. Joseph Catholic Church Parish Activity Center. The class of approximately 10 students were taught basic Czech and learned about the Czech culture by instructor Stanislav (Stan) Vitha, BVCHS member, who is from Olšovice in the Southern Bohemian region of the Czech Republic and now a resident of Bryan. To help strengthen the students' learning of the lessons, homework (domácí úkol) was assigned. On the last class day, the students enjoyed watching a short Christmas movie, singing a Czech Christmas carol and were given a "Living Language In-Flight" Czech CD to learn and listen to basic Czech phrases and words.



Instructor Stan Vitha with Spring Semester Czech Language Class Participants

October 2022 Czech Heritage Celebration

In October, BVCHS resumed its annual Czech Heritage Month Celebration after a two-year hiatus due to COVID. The celebration was held last October 22, 2022 from 12:00p.m. to 4:00p.m. at the St. Joseph Parish Activity Center (PAC). Attendees enjoyed a catered meal of chicken or pork loin with mashed potatoes, green beans, rolls and cake for dessert. The Lost Cause Band from Columbus provided entertainment and music for dancing. A silent auction with a wide variety of items and baked goods was held. A great time was had by all!



Members enjoying food and fellowship at the October Czech Heritage Celebration



Members enjoying food and fellowship at the October Czech Heritage Celebration

November 2022 Meeting

BVCHS held its next chapter meeting on November 5, 2022. President Marie Dulak called the meeting to order at 1:06p.m. There were 10 members in attendance. Cheryl Wenck, Scholarship Chair, reported that 2023 Scholarship applications will be sent out after January 1st. Included in the officer reports and business portion of the meeting was a review of the October Celebration. Jo Ann Zaeske, Treasurer, reported proceeds from ticket sales, corporate sponsorships and the silent auction and also detailed chapter expenses to host the Celebration. Stan Vitha, Worldfest and Baking Class Committee Chair, reported on preparations for the upcoming Worldfest and Christmas Baking class. Marie mentioned that the Christmas Party is set for December 3rd. Plans for the chapter Christmas Party to be held December 3rd were finalized.

Worldfest 2022

On November 12, 2022, BVCHS participated in the annual Brazos Valley Worldfest in downtown Bryan. BVCHS members enjoyed fellowship and teamwork the day before as they prepared baked goods together at the St. Joseph PAC for the next day's Worldfest. Despite the chilly weather, BVCHS members had a great time socializing and spreading our Czech culture!



Baked Items for Worldfest



Worldfest BVCHS Booth Setup Crew

Christmas 2022 Baking Class

BVCHS offered a Christmas Baking Class at St. Joseph's PAC on November 19, 2022 led by Stan Vitha accompanied by his daughter Erika Vitha. Participants made Czech Christmas bread (Vánočka) and Gingerbread cookies (Perníčky). The dough for the Christmas bread was made using the BVCHS big mixer, and the Gingerbread cookie dough was made by hand, rolled and then cut into shapes. After the cookies were baked, the group made the frosting, and everybody was able to take some frosting home to decorate cookies with their families. For lunch, the group baked a loaf of rye sourdough bread and made a cheese/carrot/garlic spread. The baking was done by 3p.m., and it appears everybody had a great time.



Preparing the BVCHS big mixer



Mixing Gingerbread dough

December 2022 Christmas Party

The BVCHS Christmas Party was held on December 3, 2022 at the St. Joseph Parish Activity Center with 47 members and 2 guests in attendance. Turkey and ham was provided by BVCHS, and members brought side dishes and desserts. BVCHS member Reverend John Gantt gave the meal blessing, and member Fred Wenck presented a special Christmas message. While everyone enjoyed the meal, youth member Erika Vitha played a medley of Christmas music on the piano. The annual Christmas Ornament Exchange was kicked off by a group singing along of the Twelve Days of Christmas. The celebration concluded with all singing Christmas carols led by Stan and Erika Vitha and Bruno Shimek accompanied by Tomas Pansky on guitar, and then door prize drawings



Stan and Erika Vitha and Bruno Shimek with Tomas Pansky on guitar



Christmas bread (Vánočka) made at the Christmas Baking Class



BVCHS members enjoying food and fellowship at the Christmas party

January 2023 Meeting

BVCHS started 2023 with a meeting on January 14, 2023 with 22 members present. President Marie Dulak called the meeting to order at 1:27p.m. Officer and committee chair reports were given. Membership Chair, Jo Ann Zaeske, reported 70 paid members for 2023. She welcomed new members Lydia Mousner and Lauren Gerik. Lauren Gerik, Coordinator for the State Czech Heritage Youth Pageant, gave a brief presentation on the changes to the State Queen Pageant and passed out information flyers. The upcoming Queen Pageant and Youth Pageant will be July 22nd in Hallettsville, Texas. The business portion of the meeting concluded with the election of officers for 2023- 2024. Marie Dulak – President, Rich Fayman – V.P., Cheryl Wenck - Secretary, Sharon Clements – Treasurer, and Jeannine Koll – Reporter. Jo Ann Zaeske will continue her duties as Treasurer until the Audit Committee completes their audit scheduled for February 1, 2023. Marie recognized and thanked Jo Ann for her many years of dedicated volunteer activities as Treasurer of BVCHS. Marie presented Jo Ann with a framed Certificate, flowers, and her favorite German chocolate cake for all to share. Following the meeting, door prize drawings and 50/50 raffle was held. Members enjoyed refreshments and visiting



Marie Dulak recognizing Jo Ann Zaeske for her many years of service



2023-2024 Officers
Marie Dulak, Rich Fayman, Cheryl Wenck,
Sharon Clements, and Jeannine Koll

Spring 2023 Baking Class

BVCHS held its Spring Baking Class on March 4, 2023 at the St. Joseph PAC. Stan Vitha taught the class how to make genuine Czech Kolache and fillings from scratch.



Spring Czech Language Class

The Spring Czech Language Class has begun and is taking place again on Monday nights at the St. Joseph PAC. There are 19 students in the class. There is weekly homework where students are given words and have to find the associated words in Czech.



Instructor Stan Vitha with Spring Semester Czech Language Class Participants

Membership

Please welcome the following members to our chapter for 2023:

Daniel Castanon
Kody Chambers
Lauren Gerik
Walter Haisler
Lydia Mousner
Sandra Polka
John Sefcik
Adelaide Shimek
Wanda Ricketson
Daniel Vojtek
Zachary Eisele
Joshua Eisele

BVCHS has a membership total of 109 (99 Adults and 10 Youth) as of March 2023.

Member News:

Congratulations to Jennifer Koll and Kody Chambers on their October 25, 2022 marriage.

Chris and Jeannine Koll celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary in January.

Concernments and Condolences

Sincere sympathy to the following:

Rita Vanek and family on the passing of her brother, Leroy Frnka, on November 2, 2022.

Christine Shimek and family on the passing of her father, Frank R. Olsovsky, Sr. of Shiner on January 22, 2023.

Shelly Palmos and family on the recent passing of her brother, John Vitopil.

2023 Upcoming Events

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| April 30
12:30 p.m. | BVCHS Membership Meeting and
Scholarship Presentation
C&J BBQ, Bryan, Texas |
| September 9 | BVCHS Membership Meeting
St. Joseph PAC, Bryan, Texas |
| October 14
12:00-4:00p.m | BVCHS Czech Heritage Celebration
St. Joseph PAC, Bryan, Texas |
| November 4 | BVCHS Membership Meeting
St. Joseph PAC, Bryan, Texas |
| November 11 | CHS State Fall Membership Meeting
Hosted by Brazos Valley CHS
St. Anthony's Malinoski Center
Bryan, Texas |
| December 9
12:00 p.m. | BVCHS Christmas Party
St. Joseph PAC, Bryan, Texas |

Please submit any announcements or news articles for the BVCHS Newsletter to Jeannine Koll, email jrzcoll@gmail.com, (214)924-8230.